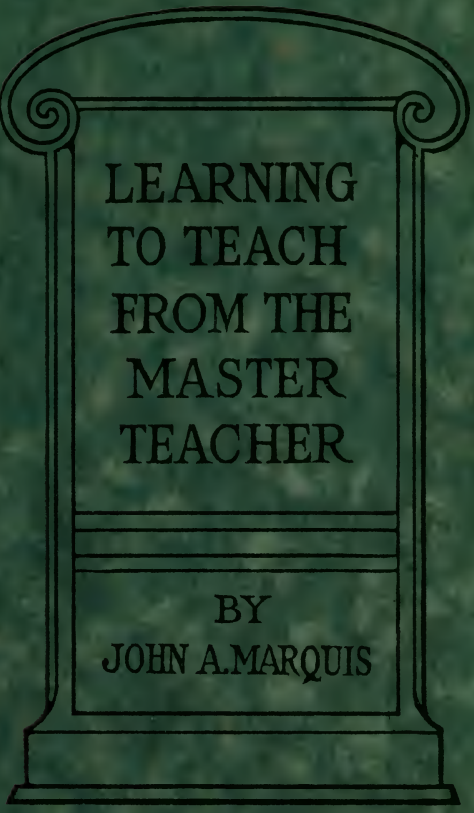
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LEARNING TO TEACH

FROM

THE MASTER TEACHER

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THE MASTER TEACHER

BY

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PRESIDENT OF COE COLLEGE



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FOREWORD

LEARNING TO TEACH FROM THE MASTER TEACHER *is a message for Sunday-school teachers written by a teacher. The chapters first appeared in the pages of The Westminster Teacher. They attracted such favorable attention that they are now offered in this more permanent form.*

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LEARNING TO TEACH FROM THE MASTER TEACHER

I

THE MASTER'S CONCEPTION OF HIS CALLING AS A TEACHER

THE office of teacher was an honorable one in Christ's day, and had been for centuries before. Up in Greece, where flourished the finest civilization the world knew, the most honored names in its history were those of its teachers: Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. The finer a people grow the more they appreciate their teachers. Many of the most illustrious leaders in Israel were teachers. The prophetic office was essentially a teaching office, and Solomon was as much teacher and preacher as king. He "taught the people knowledge," and was revered as much for his wisdom as for his splendor. So Christ came into an atmosphere of inherited respect for the calling of teacher, and he gladly availed himself of it.

1. He was called "Teacher" oftener than by any other title. The word "Master" in our Old Version of the Bible means Teacher, and is generally so translated in the Revised Version. His followers and friends were not called retainers or subjects or comrades, but "disciples," which means pupils. The relation he sustained to them

was recognized as first of all a teaching relation. When they came to him in public or private they said "Master," Teacher. When strangers came to him they generally addressed him by the same title. Nicodemus called him "Rabbi," which was a term of respect for teachers, and followed his salutation by saying, "We know that thou art a teacher come from God." He never resented, but on the contrary encouraged it. He wanted the people to understand that he was here to teach, and that was the thought of him that was deepest in the mind of his generation.

2. Teaching was his chief business during the years of his ministry. He was often a healer, sometimes a worker of signs, frequently a preacher, but always a teacher. The relation between preaching and teaching is very close, and it is often hard to distinguish between them in our Lord's ministry. The preacher addresses a larger company of people than the teacher, and they in turn listen to him silently, without asking questions or taking part in the discussion. He deals with the great principles of truth, as a rule, without discussing the processes by which they have been developed, or the facts on which they are based; and his purpose is to inspire and incite to action rather than to instruct. The teacher, on the other hand, usually speaks to a small number of people, who ask questions and take part in the discussion. He deals with facts and

processes which the preacher leaves out or takes for granted, and his purpose is to imbed the truth in the mind rather than to inspire and arouse. Measured by this standard, there were not many occasions in our Lord's ministry when he played the part of a preacher. There are a few outstanding days, like that one in Galilee when he delivered the Sermon on the Mount, when he preached in a way that lifts and thrills us to this day when we read it. But generally he is among the people, talking to them, asking them questions and playing the part of the teacher. During the last year of his ministry he withdrew himself from the crowds, as a rule, that he might be with his disciples alone to teach them.

3. The Master also regarded teaching as an essential part of his redemptive work. The cross would be meaningless were it not for the truth that preceded it. Calvary is not the whole of the gospel, but the culmination of it. Long before he suffered he began, it is stated, to teach that he must do it and explain why. It was hard enough for the disciples to understand his death as it was, and they never would have caught its meaning had it not been for the three years' teaching to which their minds kept going back all their lives.

4. Christ's scorn of unworthy teachers showed his appreciation of the real teacher's mission and influence. He denounced the Pharisees with

unmeasured contempt because they were using the exalted office of teacher to mislead the people and enrich themselves. Like everybody else with a human heart, it made him indignant through and through to see a holy thing prostituted to ignoble uses. The Roman officials in Palestine, and everywhere else, were degrading their civil offices by frightful oppression and corruption, but Christ said little about it. He could not, however, see the office of teacher treated that way without hot protest. The worthier a thing is the louder our protest against its abuse.

5. Christ made his Church essentially a teaching body. The apostles were sent to teach. One of the last things he said to them was that they were to teach all the world to observe the things he had commanded them. The Church, like its Lord, is to do a great many more things than teach, but it is never to forget this great feature of its life and work. Go through your New Testament, and you will be surprised to find how consistently and universally this teaching function of the Church is emphasized.

Four Lessons for Teachers

1. Put a high value on your work as a Sunday-school teacher. Your Lord regarded it as worthy of his best efforts, and it is worthy of yours. What he said in the quiet and seclusion of his circle of disciples is telling to-day with mighty

effect. What you do and say in the little company of your class, and as you talk with them one by one in their homes, has an eternal value. It will reach farther down into history and exert a greater influence on what is worth while in life than anything you are doing in your business or in the social circle in which you move. Never allow yourself to think that it is a trifling thing that you are a teacher of the Bible. God never gave you a nobler task to perform.

2. Make your work as a teacher an important and serious part of your life. Never push it into a corner or regard it as something to be done when you are through with everything else. Allow for it in your daily programme, and prepare for it as you prepare for everything else that is important and vital. One of the weaknesses of our Sunday-school system is that teaching is not taken seriously. Give it your best attention, and it will abound in fruit.

3. The work of Christ in the world is dependent on how you teach. The people he died to save will not be reached without teaching. It is ours to go before him and tell men about him, as he went for three years before his cross that men might understand it when it came. Whether Christ gets into the souls of your class or not may depend on how you open the way for him.

4. Regard yourself, if you are a Christian, as called to teach. Too few disciples of Christ feel

themselves under obligation to do it. When Christ called you to be his disciple he called you to teach in his name somehow and somewhere. Two things constitute a call to teach in Sunday school. (1.) The willingness to do it. You are master of that. If you are not willing to do it, you can bring yourself to it. A little serious thought and prayer will open your eyes and attune your heart. (2.) Ability to do it. If you do not have this now, you can acquire it. Teaching is an art, and not a difficult art to learn. The disciples were not teachers when our Lord found them, but in a few years the world was listening to them. They did it so splendidly that the Jew and the Roman could not afford to let them continue.

II

THE MASTER'S OBJECTIVE IN TEACHING

The Master had an objective. This does not always appear at first sight. His addresses, parables and conversations cover a wide variety of subjects, and seem to be called forth by local surroundings and incidents. His utterances appear to be spontaneous rather than premeditated and mapped out. His conversation with Nicodemus, for example, touches some of the profoundest deeps of his gospel, and contains principles which enter into the heart and framework of his salvation. Yet it was called forth by what we may call the accident of a visit from a Jewish rabbi; no plan about it, and no objective in front of it save to answer the questions that were put to him. But this is not inconsistent with the fact that he had a clearly defined object in view in all he said and did. We must distinguish between the thread of his teaching and the occasion of it. The occasion was often fortuitous, but the end he was aiming at never was. It is

important to keep this in mind. The Master never spoke because he was called on to make a speech; much less did he teach because there was a class vacant and nobody else would take it, creditable as that motive might have been to him. He taught because he wanted to accomplish certain clean-cut, definite things which he never allowed himself to lose sight of.

1. The first was the communication of religious knowledge. This is fundamental in all teaching. No progress can be made in teaching any subject until the facts, the truth about it, are imparted to the pupils. All systems of education must begin here. So the thing our Lord first had in mind was to give the people information. The third chapter of John is crowded with truth and facts that were new to Nicodemus and the world. The parables are all informing; they added immensely to the world's stock of religious knowledge. The Sermon on the Mount is packed with information. The result of his conversation with the two disciples on the way to Emmaus the day of the resurrection was that he had got them to understand what was in the Scriptures concerning himself. This is one of the things that made the Master so effective as a teacher. The people left him feeling they had learned something.

The effective Bible teacher will take his cue from this. Every time he meets his class he will

add to their stock of religious knowledge, and put them in possession of Bible and Christian facts they did not possess before. Nothing can take the place of this. No amount of fervor, no fund of anecdote, no fluency of speech can be made a substitute for imparting knowledge. But knowledge cannot be imparted unless it is possessed. The first qualification of a teacher, therefore, is that he should be a student, and know thoroughly and masterfully the subject with which he is dealing. We cannot conceive of the Master's attempting to teach, or even express himself on a subject on which he was not informed. There were usually people around him who were anxious to catch him up, and able to do it, too, if opportunity offered. The Pharisees were expert scholars, and a half-informed man could not have stood before them a minute. Christ put them to rout because he knew more than they did. It is not often that a Sunday-school teacher in these days is beset as Christ was; his hearers are usually sympathetic. But they are none the less acute and will detect ignorance as quickly as the men who watched the Master. Study every lesson until you know it, then go to the class determined to get that knowledge into the heads and hearts of your pupils. Like the Master, then, you will teach as one having authority.

2. The second objective of the Master in teaching was to awaken thought about religion.

After he had taught the people knowledge he sought to make them think about it, assimilate it and make it their own. He constantly appealed to people to exercise their judgment about what he was saying. "What think ye?" He had a way of putting things that arrested attention and challenged mental activity. Frequently he refused to answer a question directly, but stated the principle involved so his hearers could see the answer for themselves. The parable of the Good Samaritan is an example of this. "Which of these three, thinkest thou, proved neighbor unto him that fell among the robbers?" The answer was far more conclusive because the lawyer who asked it had to make it himself.

But the Master sought to direct thought as well as to awaken it. He never threw a question among his hearers without indicating the direction in which the answer was to be found. He never left a discussion until he had turned it into eternal channels.

The Bible teacher must learn from him here also. Teaching is only begun when knowledge is imparted. Contrive a way to get your class to think through the facts and principles involved in the lesson. And you will never get them to do it until you do it yourself. Stimulate them to come to the conclusions you want them to reach as the result of their own efforts. That great teacher, Thomas Arnold of Rugby, used to say,

"The effort a boy makes is a hundred times more valuable to him than the knowledge acquired as the result of the effort." This is especially true in the field of religious instruction. It is not the gospel we know, but the gospel we appropriate and assimilate, that saves us. When you teach so as to make your class discuss the lesson after they go home, you are accomplishing something.

3. The third objective of the Master in teaching was to induce decision in behalf of religion. Frequently he closed his instruction with a direct appeal for acceptance or action, as in Matt. 11:28–30. In that great passage, also, where he pictures the consequences of confessing or denying him before men, it is easy to see the end he has in view. He imparts a startling piece of information in order to persuade men to put themselves right.

The Bible teacher who sits at his feet will never fail to keep this in mind. Aim for decisions in your teaching. This does not mean that you are to call for them every time you face your class or talk with your pupils in private, but it does mean that you are never to lose sight of the fact that the end of your teaching is to persuade those who listen to accept Christ. This is the objective of your campaign—the result you are marshaling your questions and discussions and conversations to achieve. The teaching that does not eventuate in this is a failure.

4. The cultivation of character was another objective in the Master's teaching. A surprising amount of his teaching is directed to this end. When we set down the qualities that enter into character, such as honesty, truthfulness, purity, justice, steadfastness, kindness, and so forth, we find him bringing one or more of them to the front every time he speaks. Religion amounts to nothing, he insisted, unless it results in character. "By their fruits ye shall know them." He criticized and denounced the Pharisees because they made loud claims to religion, and yet were not good men. He urged his disciples to be perfect as their Father in heaven is perfect.

The teacher who walks in his steps must do this also. Your work is only begun when you have brought your pupil to a decision for Christ. The Christ character is to be built up in him, and he is to be made a man of righteousness and power in his world. Train your class to despise the things Christ despised, and to love and practice the things he loved and practiced. You cannot teach after the Master's pattern and wink at corruption and scandal.

5. The whole course of training through which the Master led his disciples culminated in preparation for service. They were taught and inspired that they might go into all the world and serve and live and die for him.

No Sunday-school teacher can omit this and be true to his great Model. Out of our classes should come the ministers, missionaries, reformers, teachers and leaders who are to lift the world to the Christ-level.

III

HOW THE MASTER GATHERED HIS CLASS

1. He associated himself with the religious forces of his day. The deadness and worldliness of the synagague did not keep him away from its services. The Church of his fathers needed reforming badly, and no one felt it more keenly than he. But he appreciated the fact that you cannot reform any institution by staying away from it. He was a regular attendant at the house of worship, and that helped him immensely in gathering his class of disciples. When John the Baptist began to hold outdoor services over on the banks of the Jordan, the Master was among the number of his listeners. There was no mistaking the fact that he was vitally interested in the subject of religion. That was evident before he began to teach, and it laid the foundation of the people's confidence in him. He was not proposing to instruct others in a subject for which he had but little taste, and which was only an incidental feature of his own life and thought. Religion gripped his great soul, and he was

always to be found where religion was uppermost. This gathered to him disciples on every hand. The day he attended the preaching of John two men saw him there and followed him when he left. They were the nucleus of his class, and around them others at once began to gather.

The Sunday-school teacher will find a valuable hint in this. He will never interest others in religion unless he shows that he is interested himself. If you want to build up your class, or gather a new class about you, get into line with the work of your church. There will always be somebody at its services who wants to be taught. The best place to find out about starting a Sunday-school class is at Sunday school. You can count on some one's being there who can help you get a start. Be a sympathetic part of the religious life of your day. Go where the activities of religion are being carried on, and you will get both an influence and an opening. Get a start; one pupil will be enough.

2. The Master spent a day with the two he found after his baptism. A day meant a good deal to him. He was as much crowded for time as any modern man of business could be. He had a tremendous piece of work before him, and only three years to perform it in. Yet he took that day to be alone with those two obscure seekers after the truth. The result proved it time well spent. For half a century one of those men was

a veritable tower of light in all Asia Minor. The other led the Christian forces in Jerusalem with such superb generalship that the city was all but captured when the brutal sword of Herod cut him down. To win two such men was worth any number of days out of even such a life as that of the Son of Man. Our Lord was never economical of his time when he was dealing with a soul. He spent an evening, probably far into the night, to talk with Nicodemus, who ought not to have needed the instruction. He sat on the curb of a well in Samaria in the hottest period of the day to teach a sinful woman something about the way of life. He allowed himself to be interrupted in the midst of his rest by people who needed to be taught. When the five thousand were fed he had just begun a much-needed vacation in a quiet spot across Galilee. But instead of getting cross about it, as most of us would have done, we are told that his heart went out to them as sheep not having a shepherd, and he "taught them many things." He was always willing to take time with people, and to put the best of his strength into teaching them.

The effective Sunday-school teacher will find a lesson here also. Your most fruitful moments with your class are those you spend with them one by one. It will pay you to give an evening to each of them, or have them come singly, as well as in groups, to your house for fellowship

and conference. Don't be sparing of your time, especially with new pupils. You can never tell what will come of such a face-to-face talk. A James or a John may be brought into the service of the kingdom because you are willing to give him an evening of your time. Great teachers have always understood this, and were lavish of their time for the benefit of individual pupils. The Master seemed to be more willing to give his time to individuals than to large companies. The personal touch is stronger, which is the greatest force in the world for the winning of men.

3. The Master taught his class something worth while, and that always increased its numbers. His first disciples were so vitally interested that they started out to tell others about what they were getting. James and John and Andrew and Philip became recruiting officers at once. People who heard him once were eager to hear him again. He always had something to say that was worth listening to. He put his best into every occasion, so the people flocked to him in multitudes and heard him gladly.

People, young and old, will come to Sunday school when they have a teacher of this mold. A dry, uninteresting teacher will dissipate any class that can be gathered for him. When you have gotten a start in the way of a class, if no more than one or two, put your best into teach-

ing it. You will always get more when you do well by those you have: "Unto every one that hath shall be given." The teacher who never has anything new to say to his class soon becomes a bore. Keep taking fresh draughts from the fountain all the time, then you will have something fresh to give those who come to be taught.

4. Wayside invitations. One day when Matthew was collecting taxes the Master walked by and abruptly said, "Follow me," and he did it. It was a bold thing to do. Tax collectors were not in good repute then; religion had little to do with their business, and the presumption was all against his having anything to do with religion. But the Master made the venture, and it won.

We need to keep in mind the importance of incidental acquaintances and chance meetings as a means of gathering pupils to us. A little card bearing an invitation handed to a man who does not attend church will often do good. Let people know you are at work for the Master, and use all the avenues that are open to you to bring them to a knowledge of the truth. Do not be afraid to ask people to come to Sunday school. Take advantage of your business and social acquaintances to this end, and hail the stranger as you meet him. Many a worldly Matthew will follow with a glad heart.

IV

THE MASTER'S GRASP OF HIS SUBJECT

One of the things said about our Lord was that he taught as one having authority. The scribes quoted somebody else as their authority, and rarely said anything on their own account. If they could cite the saying of a distinguished rabbi, especially one who had been dead a long time, they regarded the matter as settled. The Master took a different course. With him it was not, "Rabbi So-and-So says this is true," but, "Verily I say unto you." He had his authority within him, and this gave his words the peculiar ring that made men listen.

Let us see if we can discover the secret of his authority that we may learn it after him.

1. The first thing that strikes us in such a search is his knowledge of his subject. He knew what he was talking about. He was an expert on the subject he handled. He did not spread himself over the universe and pronounce an opinion on everything under the sun. He was a teacher of religion, and he stuck to his subject strictly and conscientiously. Both his disciples

and his enemies tried to divert him into other lines, but he would not allow it. Once he was asked by a friend and believer to settle a dispute about an inheritance, but he replied, "who made me a judge or a divider over you?" On another occasion he was asked for an opinion about paying tribute to Cæsar, a burning question at that time and one that would have got him into a political wrangle at once, but he answered only in so far as the matter involved God and right. He stayed by his subject, and that is one reason he knew it so well. He had the Scriptures at his tongue's end, and could also tell you what the great teachers of his own and other days said about them. Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms were as familiar to him as his own thoughts, and he could quote what had been "said of old time" as well as any scribe. He could also do what the scribe could not do: show where the "old time" was right and where wrong.

The Master did not attain this grasp of his subject without effort. His divinity does not imply that he got his knowledge without trying. Luke is careful to tell us that he "grew, and waxed strong," becoming "filled with wisdom." He got his mastery of his subject by the same processes that we get our mastery of it.

The lesson to the Sunday-school teacher is obvious. You will never speak with authority until you speak with knowledge. Knowledge is

power, and the more nearly complete it is the more convincing and controlling will be your power. The fundamental demand on every teacher is that he know. Superficial knowledge will carry weight with nobody. You will not master your class until you master your Bible. When you get Christ's grip of your subject you will begin to have his grip on your hearers.

2. Another secret of the Master's authority as a teacher was his experience of his subject. His knowledge was of the heart as well as of the brain. A mere intellectual grasp of any subject will not make you an authority on it. You must believe it, for one thing, and live it and feel its power within you, for another. Then you will speak with conviction, and, therefore, with power. When the Master talked about the fatherhood of God it was not as a theologian, but as a child of the Father. He loved God, trusted him and walked in daily fellowship with him, and, therefore, spoke from experience; and experience is always a more authoritative teacher than logic. When he taught his disciples how to pray he did it out of a soul steeped in prayer. Out on the desert and alone he had wrestled before the throne and prevailed. When he spoke about the value of self-denial, of losing life in order to find life, of bearing the cross that we may win the crown, he did it out of a life devoted to sacrifice and with the shadow of Calvary looming over him every

day. He could speak with authority about the blessedness of serving others rather than pampering self because he was doing that very thing all the time. He could say so as to convince, "It is more blessed to give than to receive," because he was continually giving and rarely receiving. It is surprising, when we come to think of it, how much of our Lord's teaching grew directly out of his experience.

Such a teacher will always carry weight. Sunday-school pupils are quick to discover whether a teacher is talking theory to them or something he has tried out and made his own. You will not get the Master's controlling and compelling grasp of his subject until you can speak on it from the heart as well as the head. The religion you get out of books may enable you to talk learnedly, but it will not enable you to talk persuasively. The great thing about the Bible is that its teaching can be tried, put to the test of experience and demonstrated in life. This makes it an easy book to teach. It is not like chemistry, for example; to teach this subject effectively requires a specially constructed laboratory and a supply of costly materials. Every man of us carries the laboratory of the gospel around with him. His life gives him the material for demonstration. There are some things that cannot be verified by experience; the facts of astronomy, for example. We learn them by purely intellec-

tual processes. But the biggest realities of the universe, the facts of God and the soul, can be tested by experience; and we really never know them until we have tried them out there. You cannot teach your class with any force that the truth, when they come to know it, will make them free, unless it has made you free. You cannot say anything worth listening to about prayer unless you pray, and, like the Master, keep on praying until you prevail.

3. The Master thought his subject out and arranged it so as to make it clear to others. He had grasp enough of it to make it simple to the most ignorant man in his class. This is the most conclusive test of how well we know a thing. The great facts of God and eternity were so clear in our Lord's mind that he could illustrate them by the simplest and commonest things in the life of his day. He could never have created his matchless parables had he not first thought out the truth they illustrated until it was perfectly clear in his own mind. It takes effort, again, to do this; but it is effort that will always pay the Sunday-school teacher. Study your lesson clear through, turn its truth over in your mind until you can use the commonest things in the life of your class to illustrate it; be able to say with the Master, "The kingdom of heaven is like unto" this or that your class is daily familiar with. Then the truth will go home because it is under-

stood. If you would learn to teach from the Master Teacher, you will never be haphazard or slovenly in your preparation. You will have things so thought out and arranged before you go to class that they will be as clear to you as the light of day. Then, like the Master also, if you are put in a place where you must speak on the spur of the moment, you will have both a fund and a heart to speak from.

V

THE MASTER'S METHOD OF TEACHING

SUNDAY-SCHOOL teachers as a rule neglect the importance of method. They generally think they are prepared for their classes when they have familiarized themselves with the subject matter of their lesson. But that is only the first step. How are you going to get what you have gathered into the minds and hearts of your class? It requires more study and preparation to master this than it does to gather your material.

The Master must have had an effective method, for a faulty method could not have produced the results his teaching did. He started with twelve in his class. Every one of them, with the exception of Judas, became a great teacher himself, and spoke to his generation with a moral authority rarely known among men. Judged by results, it is not too much to say that Jesus turned out of his school the greatest generation of teachers the world ever has known. Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, the great teachers of the most intellectual race yet produced, never had the hearing the apostles gained, or influenced so varied a

circle of human life. They were not what would be called good material when they began, but they had good training. They learned in the school of Christ, where we may learn also. Note some points in the Master's method of handling his theme and his class.

1. Lucid statement. Our Lord often combined what we call preaching and teaching; that is, he taught by making a formal statement of what he wanted to impart in clear, simple and direct language. Sometimes he confined himself to this, and gave a plain, straightforward talk on his subject, illustrating it by scenes and experiences with which his hearers were daily familiar. As a rule, he began with a particular precept or act and passed from that to the general principle involved. He dealt very little with the abstract, but made continuous use of the concrete; a good method for all teachers. There are occasions, particularly with adult classes, when it will be well for you to take up a point, especially when it deals with a fundamental of Christianity, and go into it thoroughly and make a connected and somewhat exhaustive statement of it, just as the Master did in the Sermon on the Mount and in his discussions in the upper chamber the evening before he suffered. But don't preach; say what you have to say in a conversational way, which lends itself to clearness better than formal discourse. Get on the level of your class, and never

talk down to them when you go into extended explanations. The habit of the Master in avoiding the abstract and speculative, and pressing the subject home with the concrete and tangible is a good one to adopt.

2. Thought-compelling questions. Teaching is not telling, because a great deal of our telling elicits no mental response. So our Lord had a habit of throwing in a question now and then that broke up the serenity of his class and made them sit up and think. Sometimes his questions shocked them by their unconventional and untraditional character. On occasion he would set the minds of the staid members of his class in a veritable ferment of astonishment and expectancy by the unusual form his line of questions would take. He never was stale, which is the bane of much of our Sunday-school teaching, and he never allowed any discussion he was handling to become trite and commonplace. He had no hesitancy about raising perplexities and apparently leaving things in a muddle, but through it all he left the conviction that there was no muddle in his own mind. However tangled the matter was in the minds of the class as the result of his questions, every member of it was certain that he could untangle it; which is a valuable asset to a teacher. Make your class think, but never lead them where you cannot see the way out yourself. However deep the water

may be to them, let them always feel that your head is above it and you can take care of them.

3. The Master always allowed his class to ask him questions; he provoked them to do it. The utmost freedom of discussion prevailed in his classroom. He was not afraid to go into any question that might be raised, and he also taught his class that they must not be afraid of the answer when it came. If Peter asked a question, and the answer was a condemnation of his own attitude he did not allow his feelings to get hurt and quit school. An atmosphere prevailed that made everybody willing to take what came, whether it hit him or not. Willingness to look the truth in the face and accept it is one of the first qualifications of both good teaching and good learning. The Master often made statements that startled his disciples into asking questions; for example, his statement about its being easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. When you can get your class interested enough to ask questions, they are interested enough to learn.

4. The dilemma. Our Lord frequently used this form of argument in his teaching. It is a very effective weapon against an adversary. It puts him in a corner where he must accept one of two alternatives, neither of which is tenable. The only thing he can do is to abandon his posi-

tion and come out of the corner. When the chief priests came to him about his authority for doing what he did, he answered by putting them in a practical dilemma about the baptism of John. It silenced them effectively. When a Sunday-school teacher can turn the position of a skeptically inclined pupil back on himself, and show its untenableness, he has gained a great deal. Have such grip of your subject that you will be able to show the skeptic that he is on unreasonable and impossible ground.

5. Pat illustrations. Our Lord was a master illuminating his subject by the simplest and commonest things in the life of his class. There is no better way of either making your point clear or driving it home to the hearts of your pupils than a telling illustration, but it must hit the point. Telling a story for the sake of the story is always bad. Illustrations that do not illustrate not only waste your time, but befog the issue. Select them with care, and be sure that they are familiar. An illustration that has to be explained will fail to illuminate.

6. Repetition. Our Lord often discussed a subject twice. The most casual reader of the Gospels cannot fail to see that he repeats himself. There is a vital principle of education in this, the principle of review. Any method that neglects it is defective. Some one has said that "repetition is the mother of studies." The tremendous

effectiveness of the educational system of the older Jesuits was in this fact. They never allowed their students to forget what was once learned. One of the elements of the great success of the late President Harper of The University of Chicago, as a teacher, was his skill in reviewing. The first few minutes of each recitation period was used to sum up what had been gone over before. In this way the salient points of his subject were fixed in the minds of the class so they could not be forgotten. You can no more review without preparation than you can do your first-hand teaching without it. Let your class do the reviewing. Don't make it a lecture, and don't attempt to cover all the ground gone over in the original lesson; hit the high points, especially the applications of the lesson to the life of the pupil. President Harper had another art worth cultivating by the Sunday-school teacher: forecasting the next lesson at the conclusion of the one in hand. If you can tickle the palate of your pupil so he will go home to study next Sunday's lesson and be on hand to hear it discussed in class, you have gained a big point.

7. Laboratory teaching. Our Lord gave his class something to do by way of carrying out his instruction. When the disciples asked to be taught how to pray, he gave them a form of prayer which they could use. After he had been preaching and healing for some time, he sent them on a tour to

do the same things. When they returned they made report of their trial. It is stated also that Jesus did not baptize, but left that part of his ministry to his disciples. In other words, he conducted a sort of workshop for the members of his class in which they were trained for future service. Get your class to work. When you have had a lesson on prayer, encourage them to pray and pray with them. So as to confessing Christ, helping the poor, sending the gospel to every creature, and so forth; suggest ways by which they can put the truth they have studied to practical test.

VI

HOW THE MASTER FOLLOWED UP HIS TEACHING

The Master believed in the follow-up method. He was not done with a lesson when he had taught it, or with a class when he had addressed it. Teaching was too big a thing to be over with so soon. In his conception it is a life process and is not finished until life is perfected. So we find him adopting measures to reënforce what we may call his classroom instruction and translate it into faith and character. His objective, as we have seen, was not merely to impart truth, but to influence life. Note some of his follow-up methods:

1. Association. He spent a good deal of time in the company of his disciples. So far as circumstances permitted, he lived with them. The Greeks spoke of a teacher's disciples as "those about him." Thus the students of Socrates were called "those about Socrates"; they spent their time in his presence and fellowship, and drank in daily the wisdom of his speech and the influence of his life. The Master adopted this

custom and went with his disciples to their homes, took them to his home, if he could be said to have one, had them accompany him on his journeys, worship with him in the synagogue and rest with him when he went apart to some quiet spot for a vacation. He gave them a chance to see his life and get the impact of his personality when he was off duty.

The biggest part of our education is unconscious; subconscious, our modern school of educators would call it; what we absorb when we do not know we are absorbing. The biggest part of our teaching is also of the same character. What we are speaks louder to the class than what we say. How a parent lives before his children has more to do with the making of their characters than what he teaches them. The Master gave his disciples the benefit of contact with his life, which reached and helped them in ways of which they were not conscious. He not only spake as never man spake, but he lived before their eyes as never man lived.

There is a power in such contact which the Sunday-school teacher ought to cultivate. Many a man remembers what his mother was long after he has forgotten what she said. This is true of all our friends. The perfume of their character lingers long after the sound of their words has died from memory. Be with your pupils as much as you can. Give them the benefit of your per-

sonality, that is, if you have one that will influence them in the right way. Let them see that you are as Christian in your work and play as you are in your teaching, and as loyal to Christ on week days in the office where you do business, as in the classroom on Sundays where you teach his gospel. Your life, if it is what it out to be, will win many a pupil that your words will fail to persuade.

2. Reënforced teaching. The Master followed up what we may call his classroom instruction by making it a topic of conversation with his disciples afterwards. Frequently they came to him privately and asked him the meaning of a parable or the explanation of a prophecy. Some of the most valuable things he uttered were in these after-class conversations. In this way, a flood of light was thrown on that great cluster of parables in Matthew, chapter thirteen. And what is perhaps the most solemn and impressive passage in the Gospels — his discourse on the Mount of Olives on Tuesday evening of the Passion Week, about the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world — was spoken in response to a request from his disciples for an explanation of what he had said an hour before. His informal conversations were as religious and inspiring as his formal addresses. At the dinner table, on a cross-country tramp, in a fishing boat, wherever we find him, he is making the things of God and

life and eternity plain to men. And he did not find it hard to give this turn to the conversation in any circle of which he was a member. He never dragged religion into a conversation or introduced it unnaturally. He would have made himself a bore and his subject an embarrassment if he had. He had the art of utilizing any situation to illuminate his mission.

Every week the Sunday-school teacher will find opportunities, if he will look for them, to illustrate and bring home to his class the lesson taught the Sunday before. Why is it any more unnatural to talk about some feature of the lesson when you meet a boy of your class on Monday morning than it is to say something about the weather or Saturday's baseball game? If your heart is in your work, as the Master's was, you will find a way to do it without making yourself tiresome or your subject forbidding. Make religion so natural to yourself that you can talk about it naturally anywhere and to anybody. If you will follow up your class in this way, with the right spirit and tact, they will welcome your words as eagerly as the disciples welcomed the after-conversations of the Master. When you are not afraid to discuss Christianity anywhere with your boys they will not be afraid to discuss it anywhere with you.

3. Comradeship in play. Our Lord had grown men in his class who were past the playtime of

life. We are not told that he played ball or ran races with them, but he did other things that were of the same nature. When he went on a vacation he took them with him, and when they went for a boat ride he was along. And they never failed to learn some valuable things from him on such occasions. The feeding of the five thousand with all its tremendous import was a vacation incident. Of the same character was his walking on the water and his rescue of Peter from the waves. The point of this is that to him rest time and playtime were as fruitful in opportunities to teach as any other season. He made everything throw light on the truth he wanted to make plain. Vacation helped this along as effectively as work time.

The Sunday-school teacher is making a good deal of this to-day, and he ought to. You have won a great point with your boys when you have shown them they can be Christlike on the ball field as well as in Sunday school. It is not necessary that you should open a ball game with prayer, or wear a sanctimonious face in order to do this. The most vital part of religion is rarely expressed. You can show your boys that when they are fair and clean and honorable in their sports they are carrying out the instruction of the Sunday school and doing as the Master wants them to do. A boy has gone a long way in the Christ life when he realizes that he can play

in the sight of God as truly as he can worship in his sight. Follow up your class with a view to putting God into the whole of their lives.

4. Comradeship in work. The Master was interested in what his disciples did to make a living. Sometimes he went with them on fishing trips, and in his own way helped them in their work. But more than this, he gave them part in his work. Very early in his ministry he assigned the administration of baptism to them entirely. John 4:1,2. On other occasions he sent them on tours of preaching and commissioned them to do just the things he was doing himself: preach, heal diseases, cast out devils, and so forth. He made his class a sort of training school in which his disciples could learn to do what they saw him doing. He made them feel they were partners with him in the upbuilding of his kingdom.

This is a good way to follow your class. Give them a share in your work. Let them try their hands at something positively and aggressively Christian. The disciples did not preach so well as Christ did, but he sent them out and let them try it. Undertake some kind of Christian activity in which your class can take part with you.

VII

THE MASTER'S WAYSIDE TEACHING

1. In the Master's view there are no wayside incidents in life, in the sense that they are trifling or unimportant. Everything that happens is important and purposeful. The casual conversation you have with your neighbor as you walk down the street with him is as big with opportunity as when you stand before him in the classroom. Our Lord evidently so regarded it, for he never allowed a meeting of any kind to pass unused. He did not think of himself as a teacher only after the bell had rung and the class assembled. He thought and talked of God all the time and everywhere. William Carey's famous saying, that his business was preaching the gospel and that he cobbled shoes to pay expenses, was a reflection of the Master's attitude. By wayside teaching is meant the teaching our Lord did while he was off duty, or passing from one point of effort to another. Many of the most significant things that fell from his lips belonged to this class. We suspect that, if it were reckoned up, what he thus said informally and casually bulks larger in the Gospels than

what he said formally. It would be an interesting and helpful exercise to the Bible teacher to select and put together these wayside utterances of our Lord. Their volume and importance surprise us when we begin to think of them.

There is a lesson in this for all teachers of his Word. Your object as a teacher is not to fill an appointment, but to influence lives, and what you do unofficially in the wayside moments of contact with your pupils will go as deep, and probably deeper, than what you say while standing before your class. The fact that it is not expected of you then may give your word sharper point and added weight. I know a teacher with a class of high-school boys who has done more to put Christ into their hearts while playing ball with them than while talking to them in Sunday school. He has a knack of drifting conversation Bible-ward, and illustrating the common happenings of a boy's life with Bible incidents and Bible principles that makes them a part of life. He does not drag it in, there is no chilling pause when the subject is mentioned; it is discussed as naturally and freely as any other topic. The parents of the boys say that they talk more about this wayside teaching than about what is said in class.

2. Qualifications for wayside teaching. It is by no means an easy kind of teaching. A blun-

derer can make a mess of this more easily than of class teaching. The Master, of course, was qualified, and stands as our model. For one thing, he had superb tact, which is a prime requisite. Note how he handled Nicodemus, and the woman at the well, and Simon the Pharisee. Sunday-school pupils will soon enough avoid in the classroom a teacher who is a bore, but they will run from him far more quickly on the street. The Master also had a vital and sympathetic interest in both his subject and the people to whom he taught it. Both were in his thoughts all the time. He knew his Bible so well that it was safe to begin a conversation on it anywhere. He was not afraid to be caught without his lesson help. When we read these wayside utterances they do not strike us as offhand. The occasion often came unexpectedly, but what he said impresses us as thought out and matured. His subject filled and engrossed his mind so thoroughly that he could talk about it with intelligence and certainty any time. The old Roman soldier made a point of being always prepared. Christ was that as a teacher, and so ought we to be when we attempt to teach in his name.

3. People sought out the Master to be taught when they knew he was not otherwise engaged. Nicodemus came to him thus one evening, doubtless after a day of hard public instruction, and got a lesson which the world to this day has not

forgotten. We would rather give up our railroads and steel mills than lose the third chapter of John. We have it because Christ acquired reputation enough as a teacher to make men feel that it was worth while to seek him in off hours. Sooner or later the right kind of Sunday-school teacher will have this experience. After all, religion is the most popular subject about which men think, and the teacher who has something vital and real to say about it will be hunted out by the Nicodemuses who are hungry for guidance. It may not have been creditable to Nicodemus that he slipped in to see the Master after night, but it was certainly creditable to the Master that Nicodemus came. Make it easy for such wayside seekers after truth to find you anywhere and at any time. You may create a third chapter of John in their lives.

4. The gift of meeting strangers. It is an important asset in a teacher's capital. The Master possessed it to a remarkable degree. He knew how to make it easy for a Mary Magdalene, or an alien like the Samaritan woman, to approach him. He met them more than halfway, which every teacher in his name ought to be able and willing to do. The meeting was invariably turned to religious account before it was through. See how he handled the woman at the well. Before she knew it he had her thinking and talking about God and the realities of the soul, and out of that

bit of wayside teaching the complexion of a city was changed. He won his twelve apostles because he knew how to put the question of religion to a stranger so as to secure acceptance. He greeted Nathanael, who was not only a stranger, but an unbeliever, in so convincing a fashion that the conversation had not lasted five minutes until he was won. However casually he met a man, there was nothing casual about the way the meeting ended. The stranger went on his way with a new faith in his soul and a new song in his heart. Study the Master's method of approaching and holding strangers. He was not a politician in our sense of the word, but he had the peculiar power to greet and grip men, which is the secret of leadership everywhere.

5. The Master traveled a good deal with his disciples, and used the time en route to good advantage. These journeys his fellow travelers never forgot, and the world is grateful to this day that they have been recorded. I will mention but three instances. To begin with, the most important thing he ever said about himself was on the way to Cæsarea Philippi. Matt. 16: 13–21. It was a wayside conversation that drew from Peter the declaration that has been the Rock on which the Church has planted itself ever since, and against which the gates of hell have rebelled in vain. His teaching on that journey alone is a whole gospel. In the next place, he utilized his

journey to Jerusalem, toward the close of his ministry, to give his disciples the clearest and most impressive vision of the cross they had yet received. Matt. 20: 17*ff*. It was not understood by them, but they felt its power and carried its memory to the end. Then, there is that notable walk to Emmaus the day after the resurrection. Luke 24: 18*ff*. It should not be overlooked that the great lessons unfolded were the conversation of a stranger with two fellow travelers. Before they knew who he was, their hearts burned within them while he talked by the way. Have you ever invited a member or two of your class to take a walk with you on an evening? If not, you have missed some fine opportunities to talk quietly about the big things of the kingdom. If one by one you could send your pupils home from such a stroll with their hearts burning, as burned the hearts of those two disciples after the walk to Emmaus, you would be doing the work of a lifetime.

6. Vacation teaching. The Master took vacations now and then as he needed them, but he did not drop religion or neglect opportunities to teach. Sometimes he took his disciples with him and improved the time to their spiritual upbuilding. The feeding of the five thousand, with all its tremendous lessons, occurred while he was on a sort of camping trip with his class. The thing for us to learn is that the Master's rest time was

not an idle time. He simply varied the form of his teaching activity, and found rest by changing work instead of ceasing from it. Many Sunday-school teachers are doing this with their boys to-day, and life decisions are coming from it.

VIII

THE MASTER'S SUCCESS AS A TEACHER

1. In considering this part of our subject, it should be mentioned, first of all, that the Master never was anxious about his success. Sometimes he even seemed indifferent about the effect of his words. He was told again and again that the most influential sections of his hearers were displeased with what he said, but it did not disturb him in the least. He neither denounced them for their disagreement, nor modified his views so as to make them more acceptable. An anxious teacher is likely to do one or the other. He went on as though he cared nothing about what people thought. The last thing he was concerned about was popularity. Sometimes when the people were hailing him the loudest he slipped away from them and hid himself in mountain or desert where he could be alone.

Yet there was always an atmosphere of superb confidence about him, even when his enemies were fighting the hardest and his friends were leaving almost in a body. John 6: 66*ff*. "Fully

conscious that the world is against him, scoffed, despised, hated, alone, too, in his cause, and without partisans that had any public influence, no man has ever been able to detect in him the least anxiety for the final success of his doctrine." [1]

To disregard the popular symptoms of success, however, was one of the secrets of his power. He was sure of God and sure of himself, and to such a teacher popular favor and popular dislike mean little. Do not set too high a value on either the flattering or the chilling things people may say about your teaching. Your real success is to be judged by other standards.

2. In a former chapter it was pointed out that the Master as a teacher sought to do four things:

(1) Impart religious knowledge.
(2) Awaken thought about religion.
(3) Induce decision in behalf of religion.
(4) Train for service.

His success is to be judged by the extent to which he was able to accomplish these ends. Let us see.

(1) He threw a flood of new light on the Old Testament, and presented phases of the law the rabbis of his day never thought of. More than this, he made applications of old truth which were entirely new, and drove the knowledge of the Father home with new force and grip. He

[1] The Man Christ Jesus, by Robert E. Speer.

imparted, also, a new view of the Messiah and the prophecies concerning him. He lived in an age of teachers, but he left behind him a knowledge of God and his Word no other generation had possessed.

(2) Wherever he spoke men began to think as they never thought before. One of the objections to his teaching was that it made people think too much; it startled them out of the rut their minds had been running in for generations. This, of course, made it uncomfortable for other teachers whose word had hitherto never been questioned. "What think ye?" was a favorite introduction to his lessons. He raised a great many questions that had not been thought of before, and set his hearers to wondering about them and trying to find an answer.

(3) In bringing his hearers to a decision it cannot be said that he was unusual so far as numbers are concerned. At the end of his ministry there were but one hundred and twenty who had committed themselves to him. Paul's ministry in this respect was far more fruitful, and many a preacher all down the history of the Church has gathered thousands where he gathered tens. But success as a soul-winner is to be measured by the character of the decisions won as well as by their numbers. The Master brought twelve men to his side who afterwards turned the world upside down. And the Sunday-school

teacher who leads one boy to Christ and inspires him to become an apostle of the cross is a success. I know a very efficient teacher of young men who will not permit more than seven or eight to enter his class. He takes a few and wins them for Christ all over and all through.

(4) That the Master was successful in training his disciples for service is patent to every student of the Bible and every reader of history. Those humble fishermen and peasants went out from his class and did what kings could not do.

Here is the standard which every teacher ought to set for himself. Are your pupils growing in the knowledge of God? are they thinking more about God? are they deciding for God? and are they preparing for the service of God?

3. The Master clothed his truth with the right atmosphere. This is an important element in a teacher's success. His instruction never stopped with the intellect; it went to the conscience. His hearers left him with the conviction that what he taught was vital. They might oppose it, but they could not ignore it. He is a great teacher who can put the truth before his pupils as a thing that must be obeyed; clothe it with such an atmosphere of importance that it becomes insistent and will not be neglected. You are not done with a lesson when you have made it understood; Christ made it compelling. It clamored after he spoke it, and stuck to the soul with a

persistence that could not be shaken off. Study to make every lesson vital.

4. The hostility a teacher excites is sometimes an indication of success. One of the strongest elements of the Master's power was the fact that the enemies of righteousness could not ignore him. There was no surer indication that he was making headway than the fact that the Pharisees had to take measures to counteract what he taught. If you have managed to stir up the nests of evil in your town to deride you and to make trouble for you, do not count yourself a failure for that. Better have this than your pupils dropping out and nobody taking interest.

5. The Master's teaching grew in clearness and force as the years went on. He said many things, for example, about his death and resurrection which were not understood when they were uttered. But they were not forgotten and the time came when they dawned on the souls of the disciples with tremendous power. If you are not able to make a thing clear at the time, put it before your pupils in such a way that it will come home to them later and have its effect on their lives.

IX

THE MASTER'S DISCOURAGEMENTS AS A TEACHER

The Master was not a discourageable man. He had plenty of cause for discouragement; most men would have lost heart under a fraction of what he had to face. But he was not built that way. He was not a Mark Tapley, who kept in good heart because he refused to think about the adverse side of things or to take life seriously. He was the most serious man of his age, and that side of life appealed to him every hour he lived it. His superiority to discouragement did not come from superficial thinking, but from his habit of thinking things through. He rose above the discouragements of his life because he could see past them into the largeness of God's purpose. In thinking, therefore, of the discouragements of the Master, let us bear in mind his attitude toward them. The important thing is, not whether we shall be free from adverse conditions in our teaching, but the spirit in which we shall meet them. Jesus never abated con-

fidence nor lost heart no matter what he had to face.

Let us now consider some of the discouragements that beset him, and then note how he met them.

1. Dull minds. Our Lord, as we have seen before, was a master at making things plain. Still he was not always able to make himself understood to the men who listened to him. The brightest members of his class often missed his point. And the failure was not in the less important features of his teaching, but in its cardinal and vital principles. His death, his resurrection, the atonement, the terms of discipleship, the nature of his kingdom, the very fundamentals of his mission, seemed beyond the comprehension of his most alert and faithful pupils. He selected a small band with a view to training them to leadership, yet they could not understand, much less explain to others, the principles that were the corner stone of the faith they were to teach and preach. Yet they were reared in a Messianic atmosphere; they were fairly familiar with the law and the prophets which spoke of him, and he had reason to expect that they would understand. But for the three years he taught them they were a continual disappointment to him. Yet they were not dullards above the common run of men. They were types of what the religious teacher meets everywhere.

After months, possibly years, of hard, patient work you find the brightest members of your class have not caught the point, or have acquired but a surface knowledge of what you have been trying to teach. The Master did not allow this to discourage him. Not once did he hint at quitting, or intimate that it was of no use to continue. He realized that the average human being is not a religious genius, and patiently kept on doing his best.

2. Closed minds. The Master also addressed a good many people who did not try to understand. They did not care enough. They were willing to stay in the class as long as he handed out loaves and fishes for nothing, but for the spiritual significance of his teaching they had no appetite. They were glad to have him heal their diseases and fill their stomachs, or if he would play the rôle of a political revolutionist they would listen and applaud, but when he began to talk about the bread of life, and to insist on repentance and faith and prayer, they lost interest and turned away.

Most teachers have felt the chill of this discouragement. They are trying to instruct minds that are practically closed to the subject of religion, not because they are unbelievers or cherish a hostile thought toward the school or their teacher, but because they are not interested. When questions bearing on reform or

politics or socialism or literature are discussed the class is large and attentive, but when the teacher turns to the things he is set to teach attention is lost and the atmosphere grows stale. It is worth while to remember that the Master went through it all.

3. Successful opposition. Opposition of any kind is discouraging enough, but when it becomes triumphant a spirit of rare grace and courage is required to stand up against it. In almost every audience the Master addressed, outside the inner circle of the Twelve, there were people who were determined to misrepresent and pervert. The most gracious and benevolent things he did were watched with a view to catching something that could be turned against him. When he healed on the Sabbath, the good done was slurred over, and a furor raised about his being a lawbreaker. When he performed miracles, and all of them miracles of blessing, he was charged with being in league with the Devil. When he talked about the kingdom of heaven and its King, he was accused of speaking against Cæsar. This is hard to bear. When the people you are trying to help twist your words out of their meaning and attribute the best things you do to evil motives, you feel like letting them alone. The game does not seem worth the candle. The Master knew the sting of this, and remained sweet-spirited and undismayed in spite of it. He not only had to

meet it, but to endure the depression of seeing it succeed. It was very apparent during the last year of his ministry. As we read the Gospels we can see his opponents and traducers slowly, but surely, getting the upper hand. Every day the shadow of the cross grew darker about him. Nobody saw it more clearly than he. But he didn't quit; he went straight on in the course he had set before himself.

It is seldom a Sunday-school teacher to-day has to face this experience, but where he does it ought to stimulate him to new confidence and courage to see what the Master endured, and the spirit in which he did it.

4. Adverse conditions. The spiritual atmosphere in which Jesus had to live and teach was depressing. The people were ignorant and volatile, the rulers bigoted, and vital religion moribund. Formalism had its withering grip on everything. The nation was discouraged, the promises were thought to have failed, and a cynical and skeptical pessimism possessed the times. If the gods of Rome were dead, the God of Israel had become a formality in the mind of the ruling classes. The Sadducees were dominant, and they were to Israel what the patricians and philosophers were to Rome, rationalistic, sneering and of the earth earthy. The Master generally passed this upper class by, and gave his attention to the lower strata, for ignorance is always more hope-

ful than indifference, especially when it is cynical and skeptical.

To meet such a situation, and apparently make no headway against it, is discouraging business. The Sunday-school teacher is liable to run against something like it any time. Churches and communities now and then get into a kind of mental rut in which they are ready to throw cold water on anything outside the settled routine. When a plan to better things is proposed it is met with, "Oh, that will do in some places, but no use to try it here; our people won't take to it," and so forth. Bear in mind that the Master met this, raised to the ultimate power of discouragement.

5. Waning interest. A good many people started to follow the Master, but after a while lost zest and dropped out. Even he could not hold them. After three years of the best teaching the world has ever heard, during which he spoke to thousands of people, one hundred and twenty were left, and most of them had to be bolstered up by his post-resurrection ministry.

This is one of the stock discouragements of the religious teacher. Many start, but few remain. Boys attend until they are in their mid-teens, and then seventy per cent of them fall out. It is easier to get a class than it is to hold it, and when its ranks begin to thin, the spirit of the teacher sags, and he is apt to write himself a failure. The Master knows how you feel.

How the Master Handled His Discouragements

1. He was sure of himself. He recognized that the key to the situation was in him and not in the obstacles that opposed him. Discouragement is a condition of soul, and not of the outside world. Circumstances are discouraging only when a discourageable soul handles them. The Master did not have such a soul, consequently he was not discouraged. Keeping in good heart is not a question of whether circumstances are for us or against us, but a question of what we are within. The Master had meat to eat that the world knew not, therefore, the world could neither elate nor depress him. The best antidote to discouragement is a healthy, vigorous soul, as the best protection against disease is a healthy, vigorous body. Keep your spirituality up to par. The Master had no quarrel with events, however untoward, because he had a sound soul. When a man has that reverses do not discourage him.

2. He took the wider view, which is the view of faith. The higher up you are the farther you can see. The Master looked at life from the altitude of God. When he met discouragement it did not affect him because he looked down on it from the throne where he could see the other side of it. So he could pray for those who stood

in his way all through his life and nailed him to the cross at last, because he took the wider view of that awful hour. He saw the Godward side of things, and that side is never discouraging. He was working with God. "My Father worketh even until now, and I work. No matter what happened at the time things had to come out right in the end.

3. He worked on. He never regarded his hands as tied. When he was blocked in one direction he patiently and serenely turned in another. When he was blocked in all directions and nothing was left to him but to die, he did it as sweetly and confidently as he fed the multitude by the sea. He had something to do, and he did it up to the last moment. Such a man is a good deal more likely to discourage the world than the world is to discourage him.

4. Of course he prayed. In every great crisis of his life we find him alone with the Father at the first opportunity. After one of the severest and most depressing days of ministry in Capernaum, when he was misrepresented and badgered and obstructed from daylight to dark, instead of going to bed he slipped out into the mountain in the evening and spent the night in prayer. The next morning there was no trace of discouragement in his face or in his heart.

X

THE MASTER'S ENTHUSIASM AS A TEACHER

ENTHUSIASM is a synonym for inspiration. The word literally means "God within," possessed by God. From this its meaning has broadened to include passionate devotion to any cause. The origin of the word is thus distinctively religious. The original enthusiast was a man with a passion for God; God possessed him, and was the zest and zeal of his life.

1. This is the kind of man the Master was when he was here. There was not an icy drop of blood in his veins. He never did anything indifferently, but what was worth doing, in his mind, was worth doing with all his might. Of course, such a temperament is bound to offend. Decorous people thought he pushed things too far, and took an unbalanced view of life. His family went so far as to explain that he was out of his head, and must not be taken seriously. They did not object to his doing the will of the Father; they were proud of it. It was not his work, but the spirit in which he did it that offended his critics and made his friends feel that

they must apologize. They wanted him to be moderate and self-restrained, and he was forgetting himself and working with an abandon they thought no sane man would be guilty of. It fell to his lot to suffer the misunderstanding and opposition that is the portion of all men who are on fire. Festus thought Paul was mad because the apostle in his enthusiasm for his religion forgot his chains, his fight for freedom and the royal presence in which he was standing. Pope Leo X said that Martin Luther had a "fine genius," by which he meant that the reformer was crazy because he was forgetting himself, his chances of preferment, and everything a selfish man would count dear, and making war to the death on the abuses of his day. The Wesleys and Whitfield were called all sorts of hard names for the extremes to which they pushed their zeal for the salvation of England's poor.

So if your heart is aflame with interest in your work and for the spiritual life of your school and church, don't be discouraged when respectable wiseacres caution you to go slow and not tread too hard on the zeal-destroying proprieties of life. "It is all right to be interested in the boys of your class, but don't press the claims of religion until it becomes embarrassing." You are in good company when thus beset. It is the same wet blanket that was thrown on the enthusiasm of the Master, and on all the great teachers of his

kingdom ever since. But neither he nor they were damped by it. Enthusiasm of the right kind refuses to grow cold because it is in a chilly atmosphere. The temperature of a healthy body keeps up to par in the icy blasts of winter as well as in the genial warmth of summer. So will the temperature of our souls if they are of the right kind.

2. The Master's enthusiasm was one of the elements of his power as a teacher. Everybody recognized that he was in deadly earnest, and while the world may dislike and oppose such a man, it always respects him and listens to him. A man whose nature is not on fire with his mission would never have withstood the seductive appeals of the tempter Jesus did when he was led into the wilderness. Matthew, Mark and Luke all relate that when he came out of that trial he went into Galilee filled with the Spirit, preaching and teaching, with marvelous power. His severe temptation not only failed to abate his enthusiasm, but increased it. Sometimes he kept his classes far into the night because he could not stop and they could not leave. Witness how they hung on his words in the upper chamber, and followed him out to Gethsemane the night before he suffered, and how he kept telling them of the large things of the kingdom until the very last. When people came to him for loaves and fishes and to be healed of their diseases, he turned their

presence into an opportunity to teach. His chief pity for men was that they were without teachers and teaching. It was this that stirred his compassion for the multitude that disturbed his rest beyond Galilee, and he fed them because he had kept them so late with his teaching that they could not return to their homes for food. He had compassion on them as sheep having no shepherd, and "taught them many things." Only a man consumed with passion for his cause could or would do that. The Master's cause was men, and he was always enthusiastic in its behalf.

3. The Master's enthusiasm was contagious. Men around him caught his fire and spread the flame of his zeal wherever they went. Philip sought Nathanael with a new thrill in his heart. Nathanael was critical and skeptical, but the enthusiasm for his friend carried him away, and he felt he must go and see. When he came and saw he waxed more enthusiastic than Philip and burst out with a confession far beyond anything Philip had said to him, "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art King of Israel." Nicodemus, scholar and aristocrat, caught something in the air that made him feel the Master and his work must be looked into. An enthusiasm had been imparted to the multitude that invaded even the formal and stately precincts of the Sanhedrin. So throughout his ministry those who touched him got a new vision and went

out with a new zest for religion and a new zeal for service. In a large sense Pentecost was a reflection of the fire that burned in the heart of the Master. Those stolid, indifferent, inert disciples became a consuming fire after they had been with him, and swept the world with an irresistible passion for God. All the weight and might of Rome could not stand against them.

Every effective teacher is endowed with some of this contagion. His spirit spreads like a prairie fire, and his pupils go out to be what he is and do what he does. If there is a man in the community who ought to be a live wire, it is the Sunday-school teacher. Young people are very quick to catch enthusiasm when it is genuine. But they are just as quick to respond to the lack of it. A half-awake teacher will put his class to sleep before he knows it. Let the impression get out that teaching is a dreary performance, something you are doing for conscience' sake and that alone, and you are done for. The class will reflect the lusterless spirit they see in you. On the other hand, let them understand that you mean what you are doing, that your heart is in it, and you are working hard to make it go, and they will be behind you to push and help. Bible classes get talked about very quickly in a community when they have a teacher who can put life into his work. When he is really in earnest, both his class and the world outside will take him seri-

ously. Put so much spirit and fire into your work that the Philips who stray in will become enthusiastic in hunting up the Nathanaels outside and getting them in.

4. The Master's enthusiasm was not affected by difficulties. He had more than his share of hard knocks, as we have seen in a preceding chapter, but his enthusiasm had a more solid basis than visible success, and the lack of such success did not depress him. It had a deeper spring than human favor or flattery; it was fountained in God, and therefore remained steady no matter what storms raged about it. The test of a Christlike spirit is not the zeal we show when people praise us and things go our way; it is the fire we put into our work when it is hard and discouraging. Anybody can be enthusiastic over a mounting cause, but only a man of mettle keeps his enthusiasm at white heat when conditions are below zero. The Master did this. Some of the most enthusiastic and hopeful and confident things he said were when his enemies were closing around him and making escape impossible. Throughout the entire third year of his ministry his cause was a waning cause, but he maintained it as valiantly and enthusiastically as though it were gaining every day. Keep up your courage. Christ never loses in the long run, and he is your Captain.

XI

THE MASTER'S PERSONALITY IN TEACHING

PERSONALITY is the greatest world force in history. No physical force has touched and molded mankind as has that human and also divine thing we call personality. Behind every great movement in the career of mankind on this earth has been some man who could attract others to him and inspire them with his ideals and fire them with his enthusiasm. Principles are important, vitally so, but apart from persons they are of none effect. One after another the great principles of truth and righteousness which bless the world to-day have waited dormant until a personality should arise to take them up and clothe them with life. Popular government was an abstraction until the Cromwells and Washingtons of the world, great-hearted humans, put the might of their personality behind it. Then it began to live and conquer. Evil lives mainly by the same force. The most dangerous rascal in the world is the winsome rascal, the more winsome the more dangerous. Charles

Lamb on one occasion refused to be introduced to a certain man whose principles were such that Lamb felt it his duty to hate him, and knew he could not do it after he once came in touch with the charm of his personality. None of us want our daughters to come under the spell of an engaging rake. On the other hand, every now and then we hear it said of a man, "he has fine ideals and lives a noble life, but what a pity it is that he is so unattractive!" There is a perverseness about the common run of us that makes us very ready to overlook a man's principles if his manners are right. There is something here that all teachers of religion should study. If there is a cause in the world that ought to have the advantage of charming and winsome personality it is the cause of Jesus Christ. It is a great deal easier to go to Sunday school when you like your teacher, and for this reason the teacher ought to strive to make himself easy to like.

1. The Master's personality was a large element of power in his teachings. John tells us that he was full of "grace and truth." He was a great human and attracted other humans to him. There was something about him that even his enemies had to recognize and reckon with. They regarded him as peculiarly dangerous because they saw that he had a peculiar power to attract men. A stale man could not have won their notice. More than once he abruptly appealed to

men to do what was generally counted unreasonable, and they did it without question. There was something about him that compelled compliance. Matthew, a hard man, whose occupation made it necessary daily to refuse all sorts of demands and appeals, was sitting in his office one morning ready to face the usual experience of a revenue officer, when the Master passed by and said, "Follow me." He did not have the reputation then of teacher and healer he enjoyed a year later. It was the appeal of a stranger to a hard man of the world to do an unusual and whimsical thing. Yet he did it, and did it without question. He had an air about him that compelled confidence. The greatest thing the disciples got from his teaching was not a doctrine, but an influence. To the last hour of their lives the big thing in their vision was that they had been with him. This, more than any specific truth they learned, held them up and kept them true and made them confident. The most trite word he uttered lived and sang in their memory like a benediction. Nothing was commonplace after he touched it. He himself was bigger then anything he said.

2. Every effective teacher must have something of the same grace. His personality is the thing that gives power and point to his words. The great teachers of the ages have invariably been men who were worth knowing personally.

They were more than thinkers and more than speakers; they were big-hearted, attractive men whom it was a delight to know. We are told that the thing that gave Arnold of Rugby his tremendous hold on the young men who crowded his halls was not his excellence as a teacher so much as his rare personality, a something in him behind what he taught that captured the heart and influenced the life. When Mr. Garfield said that Mark Hopkins on one end of a log and a boy on another was a university, he did not mean that this was so because of what the boy would learn, but because of what he would absorb by contact with that great personality. It was an education to a boy to sit on the same log with Mark Hopkins no matter what they talked about. The same thing accounts for the marvelous hold Calvin had on the people who flocked to him in Geneva. They gathered to him from every land in which Protestantism had made a start, and he fascinated them with a spell that sent them over Europe and into America ready to do and suffer all things for the cause he represented. It was not his doctrines; for they were not new, for one thing, and they are not calculated to be popular for another. It was his powerful personality more than any other factor. He was a leader in every circle he ever entered, intellectual, social, political or religious. There was a charm about him that attracted people to his

side and held them. After his death the royalists in England for political reasons caricatured him as a kind of intellectual and logical ogre without human sympathy or mercy. They did the same thing with Cromwell until Carlyle discovered him to the nineteenth century. But the study of Calvin incident to the recent celebration of the four hundredth anniversary of his birth is doing for him just what Carlyle did for Cromwell, showing us the man in his real light; a man of big human interest and charming personality. He never could have influenced the world as he did by the naked power of his utterances, mighty as they were. It was the man behind the teaching that made it tell. So with Luther and Knox and Wesley, and all the great teachers who have made the kingdom of Christ stronger in the world, the teacher must be something as well as teach something if he is to win.

3. The cultivation of personality. We are apt to think that personality is an inheritance rather than an acquirement. It is true that great personalities, like the genius and the poet are born not made, but it is also true that every one of us can strengthen and improve the personality he is born with. When we analyze the qualities that entered into the Master's personality we see that in the main they can be acquired, and his disciples do acquire them. This is what it means to grow in grace and to become Christ-

like. Note some of the things that made the Master strong and attractive:

(1) Character. This is fundamental. After all, nothing adorns like character. The most winsome thing in the world is simple goodness. Our Lord had this. He carried conviction because the people felt they could trust his character. He was genuine. The world has profound respect for such. The Sunday-school teacher ought to have and must have character. He cannot assume it; he must be what he appears to be. We are not born with character, it is made. The first step in acquiring the personality of the Master is to go into his school and live to become like him.

(2) Interest in others. A great personality is always unselfish. The Master loved people and wanted to be of use to them. It was not as a matter of duty he trudged over the hills of Galilee to teach and heal, nor was it obligation that brought him to Gethsemane and the cross. He did it because he had a heart for human kind and yearned to help. The poorest and meanest could go to him sure of a sympathetic hearing. You can learn this. One of the surest things in the world is that you will learn to feel toward people as Christ felt toward them, if you will follow him. Let it be known that you are really interested in your fellows, that you care, and you will draw them to you.

(3) Sureness. The Master had that air about him. He was sure of himself. All great personalities are. When he looked down into the deepest chamber of his heart there was no suspicion of a false motive or an improper purpose. But he was not only sure of the honesty of his heart, he was also sure of his convictions. He was confident that he was right. He believed what he taught. He was not seeking applause, or a selfish gain, but doing the thing he thought was of God. This can be and ought to be ours. There are a good many things we cannot be sure of, but there is no need for doubt about what is within, our motives and purposes. We can be sure of our gospel. We have vastly more reason to pin our faith to it than had the men of the Master's day. All great personalities have this quality of sureness; confidence in themselves and their cause. It can be cultivated.

Many other elements that entered into the personality of the Master might be mentioned, but these will suffice to make clear the point in hand; personality in all that makes it attractive and powerful can be acquired. Every day will make us more likeable and charming if we honestly are learning from the Master.

XII

THE MASTER AS A MAKER OF TEACHERS

The Master turned out the greatest generation of teachers the world has ever known. The world had had great teachers before them, but they were natural teachers, born to it like poets. But the Master took poor material, or average material at best, and made epoch-making teachers of them. It required no great skill on the part of Socrates to make a teacher of Plato, for he was born with the genius for teaching. But to make a teacher of Peter and Thomas and James and their like was an achievement unknown before and unrepeated since. Let us note some points in his method.

1. He made teaching a prominent function of discipleship. It enters into the genius of his kingdom. The gospel has no other appeal than to the intelligence of men. It was not set forth on a military basis; no army went before the apostles. Much less does it resort to magic or mystery for support. Its appeal is to enlightened reason. Its first step, therefore, on entering a

soul or a world is instruction. Every one of the original disciples was called to teach, and when they were sent forth this was the chief duty they were to perform. They were saved to teach as much as they were saved to escape condemnation.

This is a large factor in the making of a teacher. We should never lose sight of the fact that teaching is as much a part of our Christian life as prayer or faith or consecration. It is one of the things we are called to do.

When Christianity became highly organized this function was delegated to a select class — ministers and officers, chosen because they were especially apt. But Christianity lost by it. When every believer was also a teacher there was a swing and an impetus to the Christian movement that made it irresistible.

Certain false forms of Christianity in our day have reverted to this early principle with tremendous effect. The growth of Mormonism, for example, is due more than anything else to the fact that every Mormon is ipso facto a teacher, and must hold himself in readiness to leave home and family and business and go to the ends of the earth to teach his religion and win converts to it. They are not learned men, even in the crude religion they assume to teach; their general intelligence is far below that of the average American. But from childhood they have been saturated with the idea that they must teach; it is part of

their ambition, and their religious life cannot be complete without it.

Here is where to begin the process of teacher-making. Hold it before our boys and girls as part of their discipleship, a service every believer in the Lord must qualify himself to perform. We repeat that not one of the Twelve was a born teacher; they were simply average men of their day, no brighter and no duller than the common run of their generation. Yet the Master called them to be teachers, and did it before he ordained them to be apostles. Keep this before your class, that they are called to teach as much as they are called to repent and believe.

2. The Master made teaching attractive by doing it well himself. As we read the Gospels we are impressed with the ease with which he did his work. It was not an effort for him to teach. He was so much the Master that it all seemed a sort of second nature to him. His life was so wrapped up in his subject that he taught by simply living. You cannot be with such a man without catching his enthusiasm, and you cannot watch him work without unconsciously falling into his ways. We instinctively admire a man who does a difficult thing easily and well. If we have a real interest in it we shall want to do it ourselves.

So the disciples caught the contagion of his teaching by seeing him do it. Their first ambi-

tion was to do what he did and as he did it. This is the most effective method of teacher-training that can be devised. Pedagogical schools and methods are good, but we must not overlook the historic fact that the best maker of teachers is the Teacher himself. Whenever a really great teacher arises a generation of teachers follows. Augustine, Anselm, Calvin, Knox, all the mountain teachers of the Church produced teaching epochs. Augustine did not set up a school of Christian pedagogy in Hippo, or Calvin in Geneva; neither of them knew anything about it in its technical sense. But they taught with such power and life that those who heard became teachers by induction.

It is always so. If you want to make teachers of your class teach well before them; do your work so skillfully and heartily that they will catch the contagion and want to do it themselves. A good teacher was generally a well-taught pupil.

3. Our Lord made teaching the chief agency of redemption. Christianity is distinctly a teaching religion. It propagates itself by teaching, and from the beginning has been the mother of schools.

The Master gave this peculiar point and emphasis. In proportion as the hearts of his disciples were fired with enthusiasm for the kingdom, they yearned to become teachers. As they longed for souls they coveted the teacher's art as the

most open way to win them. This is always true. As you excite a passion for the salvation of men you advance the cause of teaching. Christianity's greatest periods have been its teaching periods. Get people vitally interested in the gospel and they will want to teach it. When religion is warm-hearted in a church there will be no dearth of volunteers to teach. Keep this before your class also, that as they want to save men and push the kingdom around the world, so ought they to learn to teach. Every Sunday-school teacher is a missionary.

4. The Master attached large importance to his own teaching office. He was called Teacher oftener than by any other name or title, and evidently approved it or it would not have been done. He magnified the teaching aspect of his mission to the world. He was a teacher more than a healer or a worker of miracles. He did not teach when he was not doing something else, but when he was not teaching he did something else. The feeding of the five thousand was a secondary consideration. The record is that when the multitude gathered "he taught them many things," and in doing so he kept them so long that it became necessary to feed them. All this magnified the business of teaching in the minds of his disciples, and made them want to undertake it and do it well.

Let your pupils know that you take your

work as their teacher seriously and regard it as an important part of your life mission. As the Master was not a carpenter or a healer first, and a teacher incidentally, so we should not make our calling as a Bible teacher incidental to our vocations — be bankers and storekeepers and doctors all the week except an hour on Sunday morning, when we turn aside to teach. Be the teacher all the time; while you are keeping store or banking or farming continue your teaching quality. The two will not interfere, and your class will catch the spirit.

5. The Master gave his disciples teaching to do. It was not all classroom work. He established a sort of school of practice and set them to work in it. On one occasion he sent them two by two into places he was preparing to visit and told them to do what he had done and teach what he had taught. And when he went on high one of the last things he laid on them was that they should go all over the world teaching what they had received, and lay the same charge on their successors.

Encourage your class to attempt some teaching themselves. Let them know that it is part of their Master's last command. In almost every community there is room for a week-night class or Sunday-afternoon mission where those who want to teach can have opportunity to try it; and while they are making the attempt stand by

and help all you can. Give them practical training in the art of teaching, as by daily association with them you give them practical training in the art of Christian living. Occasionally it may be wise to turn the class over to one of its members to teach a verse or paragraph of the lesson. But let it always be arranged beforehand, and followed by discussion to make the experiment helpful.

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